

**SKR. INITIAL M FOLLOWED BY H OR ASPIRATION IN THE
NEXT SYLLABLE > INITIAL BH IN M. I. A. V.**

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Abbreviations.

M.I.A.V.	Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars.
Pkr.	Prakrit.
Skr.	Sanskrit.
Pb.	Panjabi.
H.	Hindi.
G.	Gujrati.
S.	Sindhi.
Mar.	Marāṭhi.
B.	Bengali.
Nep.	Nepali.
Pa.	Pali.
Per.	Persian.
N.	Neuter gender.
M.	Masculine gender.

Initial **bh** of Skr. has in most cases been retained in Pkr. as well as in its later descendants, as, Skr. **bhramara-** > Pkr. **bhamara** > Pb. **bhaur**; Skr. **bhajyate** > Pkr. **bhajjai** > Pb. **bhajje**. There are a few cases, however, in which the initial **bh** has descended from the initial **m** and the aspiration of the succeeding syllable. (See examples, given below). The fact that the retention of the initial **bh** was somewhat regular, and the change of the initial **m** combined with the **h** or aspiration of the following syllable was rare, has been responsible for the extension of the former phonetic change even at the cost of the latter. This note aims at restoring to **mh** a few of its own descendants.

Corresponding to Pb. **bhiĵj** we have H. **bhījnā**, Mar. **bhiĵṇē**, G. **bhĵvū**, Nep. **bhiĵ-**, B **bhiĵā**, S. **bhiĵaṇu**, all meaning "to be wet, damp or moist." In some of these vernaculars we also come across the verbal roots like Pb. **bhēñā**, **bhiaññā**, H. **bhigōnā**, **bhigāna**, **bhiĵānā**, **mihānā**, meaning "to make wet", "to moisten,"

H. **mihā**, **bhiĵ**, and **bhigā**, all related to each other in sense and sound, point to a common origin. Through their form and meaning they seem to suggest that they are connected with and descended from the Skr. **mih-**, "to wet, to moisten." H. **bhiĵ**, Pb. **bhiĵj**, could be derived from Skr. **mihyate**, H. **bhigo**, **bhigā**, (from ***meghaya**-causal of **mih**) and **mihā** also from Skr. **mih**. Pb. **bhē** could be connected with Skr. **mehati**, while **bhiañ** is the causal of **bhē**.

The phonetic change is already known to us through the following words. H. **bhañs**, G. **bhēs**, Nep. **bhañsi**, Pb. **mañh**, etc., have been considered by most of the scholars as descended from Skr. **mahiṣī**. Mar. **bharai** has been traced back to Skr. **smarati** (*Grammatik der Prakrit Sprachen*, P. 217). We know that the initial **m** in Skr. changes into **v** in Pkr., as Skr. **manmathaḥ** > Pkr. **vammatho**. We are also acquainted with the change of medial **hv** into **bh** as in the case of Skr. **jihvā** > Pkr. **jibbhā** to Pb. H. **jĵbh** and Pb. **jĵb** and H. **jĵh**. These examples show that in some cases the initial **m** with the aspirations of the following syllable shifted close to it has yielded **bh**, probably through **vh**. Whatever the process, the phonetic change is the same as has already been admitted to have taken place in the case of certain words.

It will be useful here to make mention of the descendants of Skr. **dah-**, to burn. In H. we have **dāh**, **dāgh** and **dājh**, corresponding to H. **mihā**, **bhigā** and **bhiĵ**. In Skr., too, we find **dāgha-** and **megha-** (corresponding to Persian **dāg** and **meg**) along with **dah-** and **mih-**, the two latter having lost the soft guttural and retained only the aspiration,

Again, the connection of **bhij** with rain is clearly indicated by the Mar. words **bhij-pāūs** [Skr. **prāvṛṣ-**], well wetting or soaking rain, and Mar. **bhijāṇā**, soaked grain.

Not only this. The new derivation enables us also to offer a satisfactory interpretation of Pa. **abhijjamāno**, which has so far been considered difficult to explain (See **abhijjamāno** in Pa. Eng. Dictionary—Rhys Davids & William Stede, Surrey, 1925), in the contexts in which it occurs. For example, in **Dīgha Nikāya**, London, 1890, Vol. 1, page 78, we read a description of the psychic powers of a Bhikkhu. He is described as having the power of becoming invisible, as being able to plunge into and emerge from the earth as one can do in the case of water, as being able to pass (penetrate) through a mountain, a wall or a rampart without touching it. In this very text we read about him “**udake pi abhijjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭhaviyaṃ.**” This **abhijjamāno** has been derived by some scholars from Skr. **abhid-ya-mānaḥ**, not being broken. It is just possible that others may be connecting it with Skr. **abhi-añj-**, to smear with oil etc. It is clear, however, that sentences like “he goes remaining unbroken even in water,” or “he goes getting smeared even in water” are meaningless in the passage referred to. On the other hand, if we connect Pa. **abhijjamāno** with Skr. ***a mih ya mānaḥ**, not being made wet, we at once get at the right interpretation which is “he goes into water without getting wet as one (goes without getting wet) on land.”

Against the etymology already holding the field and accepted by the pre-eminent scholars like Prof. Turner and Prof. Bloch, the following objections suggest themselves to us:—

1. **bhij**, **bhigo**, **bhē**, **bhiaṭi**, **mihā** of M. I. A. V., related to each other in sense and sound, point to a common origin. It does not seem so easy to derive **mihā** from Skr. **abhyañj-**.

2. We find that **bhij**, **bhigā** etc., mean to be wet, to moisten respectively. Skr. **abhyañj-**, however, has always been employed in the sense of smearing or anointing as with oily substances.

Its primitive sense is that of adorning or decorating. Scholars are all acquainted with the fact that Skr. verbs have, in most cases, retained their original meaning even if some secondary senses have cropped up in the course of semantic evolution. Such cases in which the original sense has altogether disappeared are very rare. It becomes necessary therefore for those upholding the view in favour of **abhyañj-** to prove that the evolution of the meaning has indeed taken place in the manner suggested by them.

Let us take another word. It is known to most scholars that Pb. **bhedū** is a descendant of Skr. **mēḍhra-**, so is also Pb. **bhēḍ**, a representative of Skr. **mēḍhrī**. Similarly in Hindi we have **bhēr**, a ram, from Skr. **mēḍhra-**, and **bhēr**, a sheep, from Skr. **mēḍhrī**, and also H. **mēḍhā** and H. **bhēḍā** from Skr. **mēḍhra+ka**. (By the way, the presence of aspiration in the second syllable of **mēḍhā** and its absence in the same syllable of **bhēḍā** lends support to the view that **bh** is a representative of **m** and aspiration), G. **bhēḍ**, a sheep, a goat, too, is to be traced back to Skr. **mēḍhrī**. Skr. **mēḍhra-**, n., is a primary derivative of **mih-** with the suffix-tra (**ṣṭran**) (Panini 3. 2. 182). We get **mēḍhra-** through **mēgh-** and **tra**. **Mēḍhra-**, mas., a ram, seems probably a product of false analogy with its n. **mēḍhra-**. The regular mas. stem should have been **mēḍhr** and its nominative singular would have been **mēḍhā**. It does not seem improbable that Mar. **bhēḍ** (poetical) timid, is but a figurative use of G. **bhēḍ**, in the sense of sheep or goat, the latter being always considered timid (cf. Per. **buzdil**—coward, lit. having the heart of a goat).

Even if there were any doubt with regard to the derivation of **bhij** from Skr. **mih-y-**, it should disappear now in the light of the similar phonetic change that has taken place in the case of a derivative of **mih-** itself.

Similarly we have Pb. **bhull**, H. **bhūl**, Nep. **bhul**, B. **bhulā**, Mar. **bhul**, G. **bhul**. Different scholars have derived them differently. Professors Turner, Pischel and Bloch derive them from Skr. **bhur-** through **bhulati***, Pkr. **luhai** through **lubhai***.

The very fact that Skr. **bhur-** has been used very rarely renders it improbable that Pb. **bhull** etc., have descended from it. It is the rarely used words that die a natural death and it is the active words, frequently employed, that go on living in one form or the other. Pb. **bhull** and H. **bhūl** can be derived from Skr. **mūḍha**, the past participle from Skr. **muh-**. The different senses in which Skr. **muh-** and its derivatives like **mūḍha-**, **mugdha-**, are used are nearly the same in which Pb. **bhull** and its derivatives like **bhōlā**, **bhulliā** are employed. In Skr. we have **adhvānam mōhayati** corresponding to Pb. **rastā bhulāda hai**. The meaning of a-**mōgha-**, unerring, not going astray, seems to support the new view-point to a certain extent.

That the root originates from a past participle need not surprise us. There are so many other roots in this and other vernaculars, for example, Pb. **naṭṭh** from Skr. **naṣṭa-**, H. **rūṭh** from Skr. **ruṣṭa-** etc. which have past participle as the root. (See in this connection art. No. 241 in *formation de la langue marathe*, Bloch, Paris, 1920.)

Again, if we compare Pb. and H. **bhir**, in the senses of uniting, colliding, coupling, pairing and its relatives in the other M.I.A.V. with the Skr. **mith-**, we find there is striking resemblance in their meanings. The phonetic change is the same as in the case of Pb. **bhijj**, Pb. **bhull**, H. **bhaīs**, etc. The change may be considered something like **mith->mhit->mhid->bhir**. The change of **t** in **mhit-** into **d** and subsequently into **r** is on all fours with the change of Skr. **pat-**, to fail, into H. **paṛ**.

It is clear from what is given above that Pb. **bhijj**, **bhull**, **bhir** and other near relatives of theirs, one and all, owe their birth in reality to Skr. words with initial **m** followed by **h** or aspiration in the succeeding syllable. But Skr. words beginning with **bh** having a large and rich family and long list of descendants may be said to have succeeded in bringing certain others born of poor parents into their own fold. It is but proper to restore the lost children to their own parents in view of the points raised in this short note.